

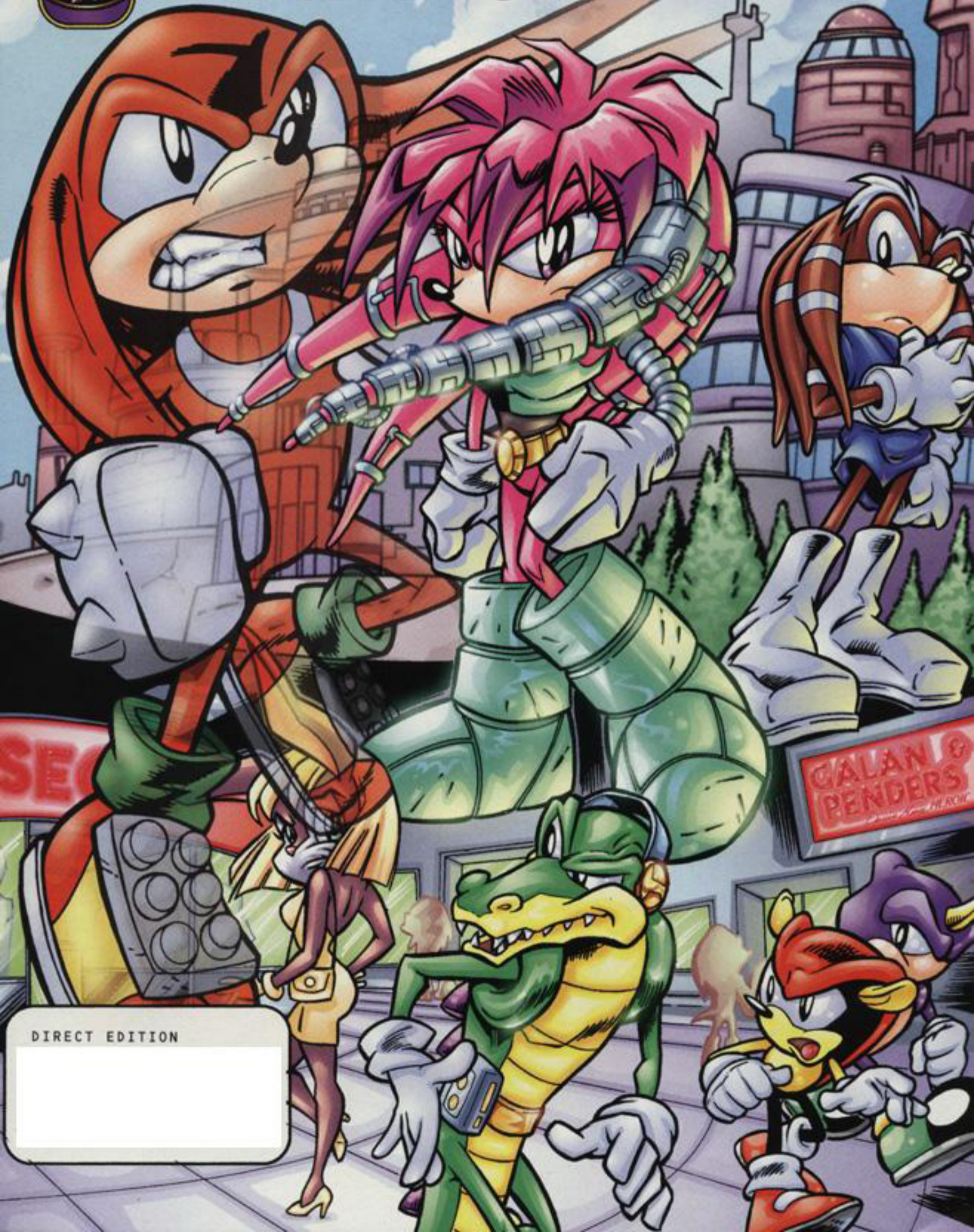
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KNUCKLES™

THE ECHIDNA



DIRECT EDITION

KNUCKLES™

BOOK TWENTY-SIX THE FIRST DATE

PART ONE OF THREE

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BORN TO THE MOST NOBLE OF ECHIDNA HOUSES, THE LATEST TO CONTINUE THE FAMILY HERITAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY AS GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND, DEFENDER OF ALL AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL FROM THE WORLD BEYOND AS WELL AS THOSE WHO WOULD THREATEN FROM WITHIN!

ARCHIE COMICS AND SEGA PRESENT... KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA!

COME THE SPRINGTIME, WHEN FLOWERS BLOOM, BIRDS CHIRP AND BEES PRODUCE HONEY, WE FIND ONLY TWO TYPES OF CREATURES: THOSE IN LOVE AND THOSE WHO WISH TO THEY WERE IN LOVE. AND FOR THOSE NOT ENGAGED IN THE MORE PLEASURABLE PURSUITS, WE FIND THEM GATHERING TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE MEANING OF LIFE AND ALL IT HAS TO OFFER IN ALL ITS VARIOUS AND ENDLESS PERMUTATIONS...

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HARD TO BELIEVE THE CHARMSMAN IS STILL GONE!

I FIGURED HE'D COME 'ROUND WAAAY BEFORE THIS!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED, VECTOR!

IT'S NOT LIKE HE HAD A CHOICE, ESPY!

CHARMY GREW UP!

STUFF

MAGIC WOK

EAT THIS!

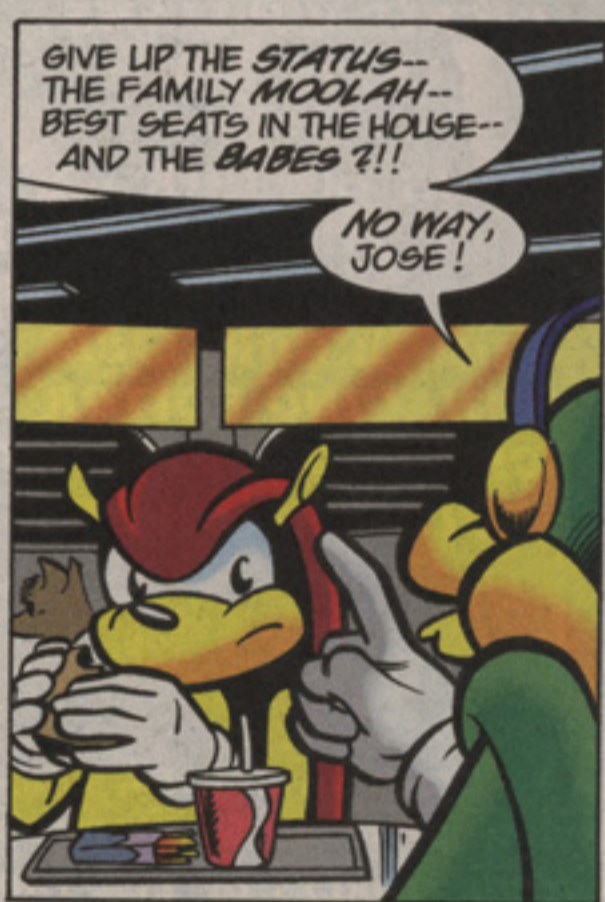
SN



SURE, HE DID!

HE COULD'VE RENOUNCED HIS HERITAGE!

HAH!



GIVE UP THE STATUS-- THE FAMILY MOOLAH-- BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE-- AND THE BABES ?!!

NO WAY, JOSE!



HIS RESPONSIBILITIES OUTWEIGH ALL OF THAT!

BESIDES, HE'S NOW BETROTHED!

WHAAT?!?



WHERE DID YOU HEAR THIS?
YOU HOLDING OUT ON US?

C'MON, ESPY!

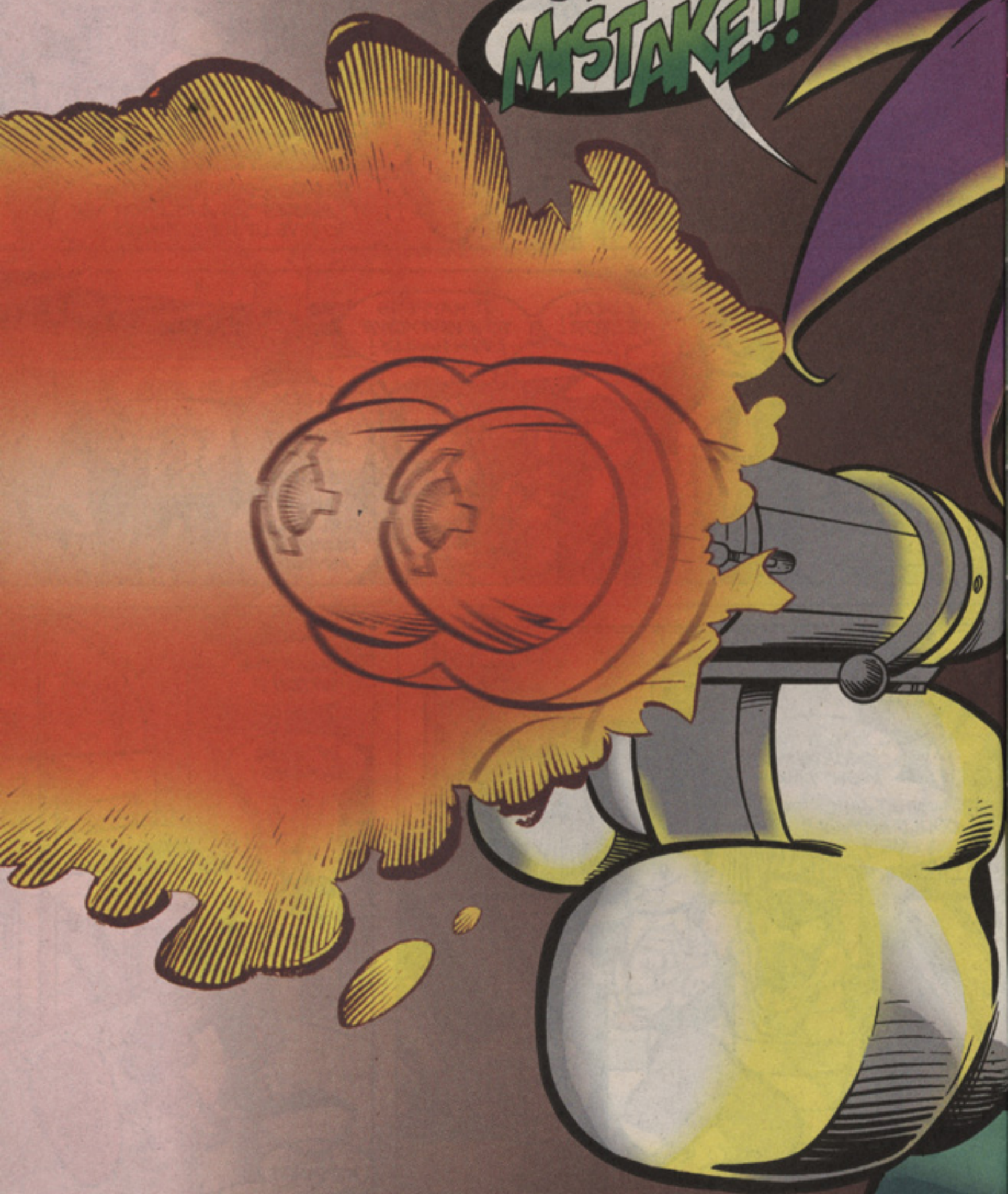
GIVE IT TO US STRAIGHT!



"-- SHE'S GOT HER SIGHTS
AIMED AT KNUCKLES!"

RUN OUT ON ME,
WILLYA!!!!*

**BIIIIIG
MISTAKE!!**

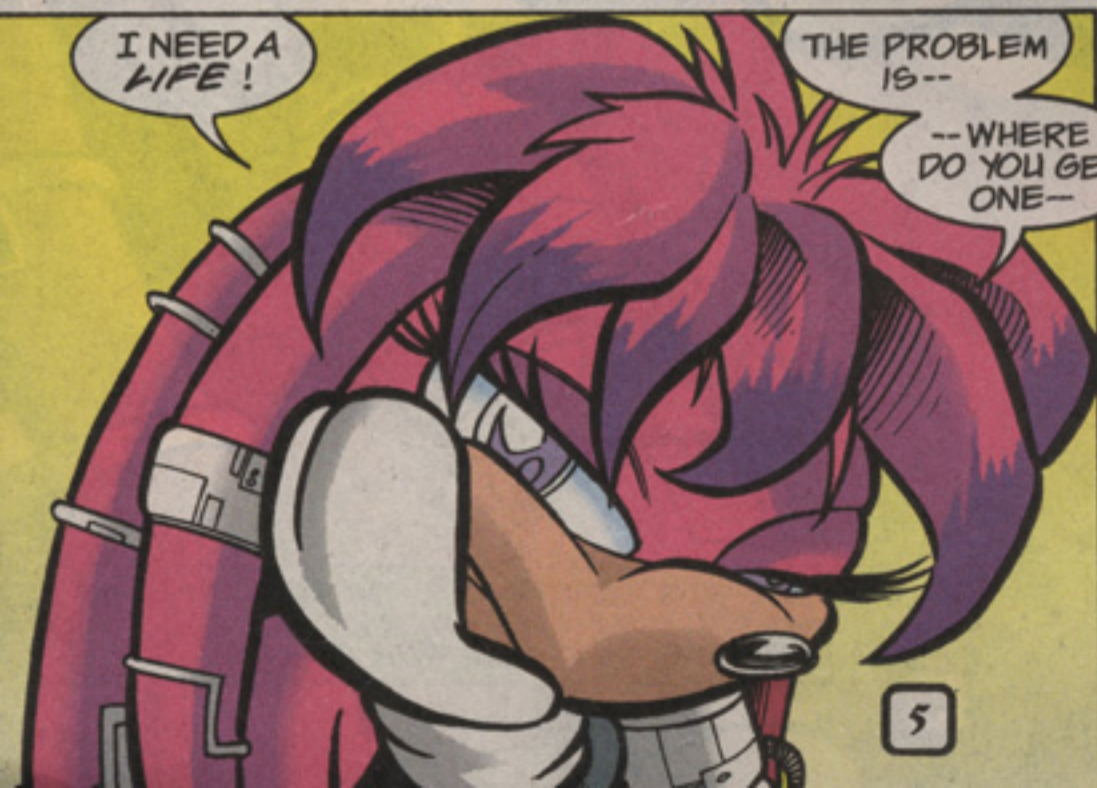
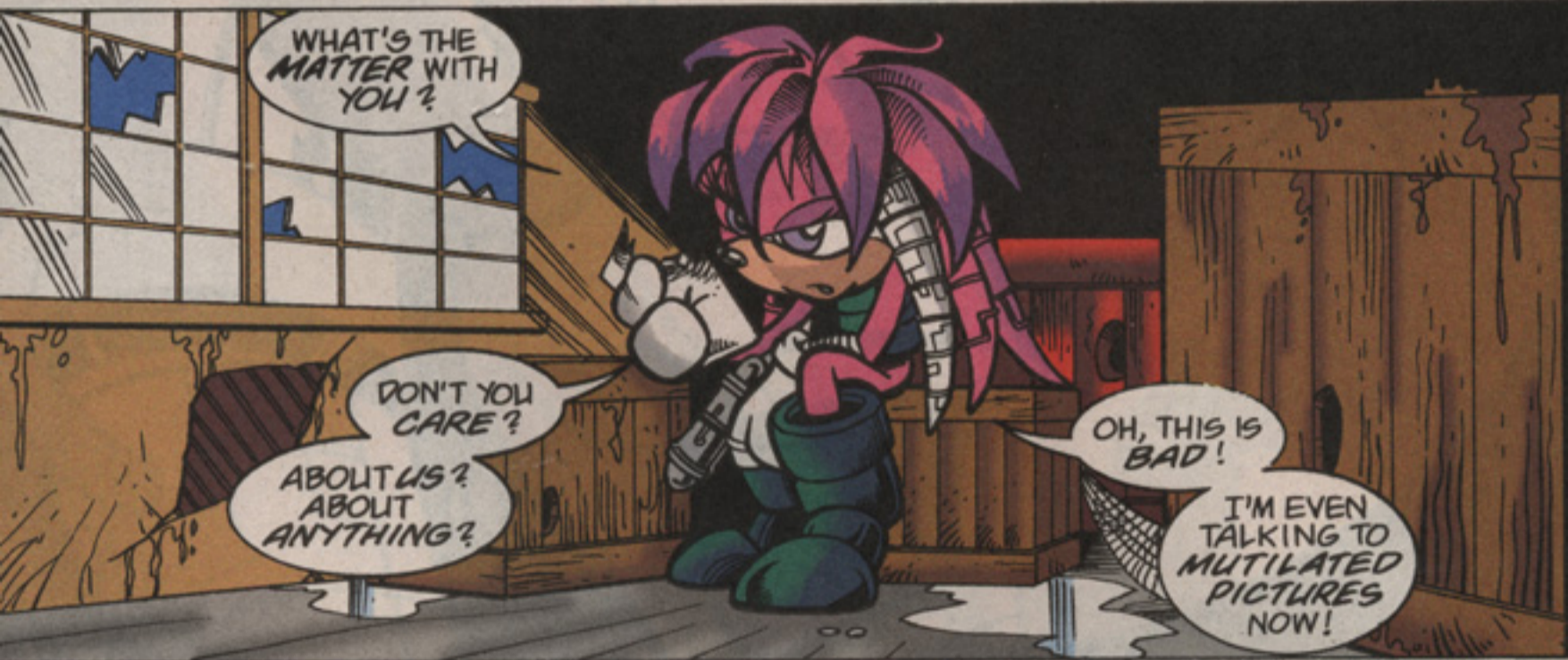
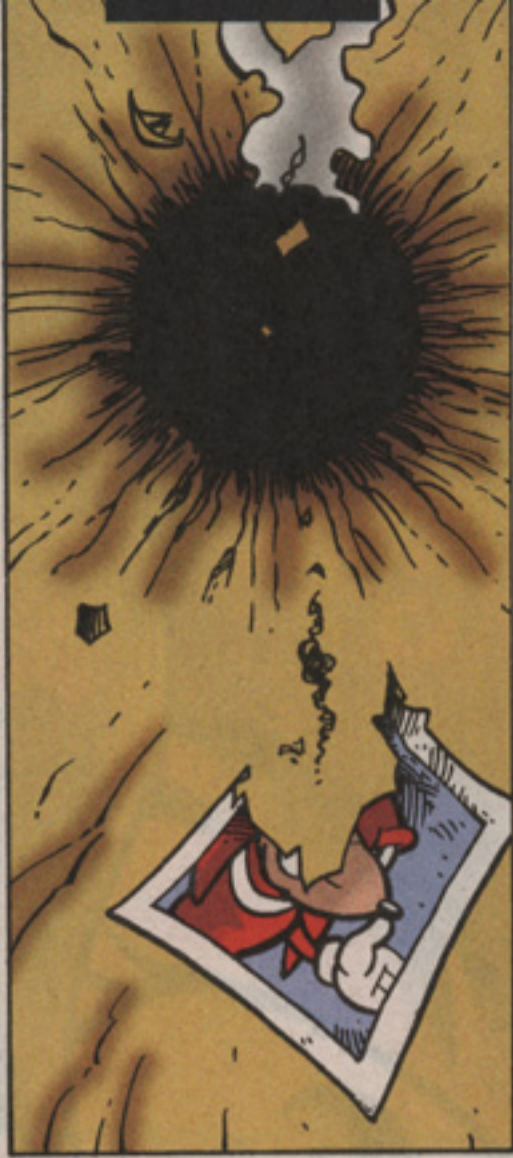


SHE L♥VES Y♥U..

(and you know that can't be bad!)



* JULIE-SU IS REFERRING TO THE ABRUPT WAY KNUCKLES LEFT HER AT THE BEGINNING OF LAST ISSUE--JUSTIN.



"--FOR NOT BEING HERE TO TALK WITH ME RIGHT NOW!"

HERE! HAVE SOME BREAKFAST!

WELL, WELL, WELL!
LOOK WHAT THE CAT
DRAGGED IN!

THANKS! I'M STARVING!

YOU OKAY,
SON?

YOU LOOK LIKE
SOMETHING'S ON
YOUR MIND!

I WAS WONDERING
ABOUT WHY BOYS
AND GIRLS GET
TOGETHER!

Umm--uhh--
WHY DO YOU WANT
TO KNOW?

Splatters
H!



IT'S JULIE-SU, DAD!

I FEEL WEIRD WHENEVER I'M WITH HER!

WEIRD?



YEAH! LIKE I'M HAPPY AND MAD AT THE SAME TIME!

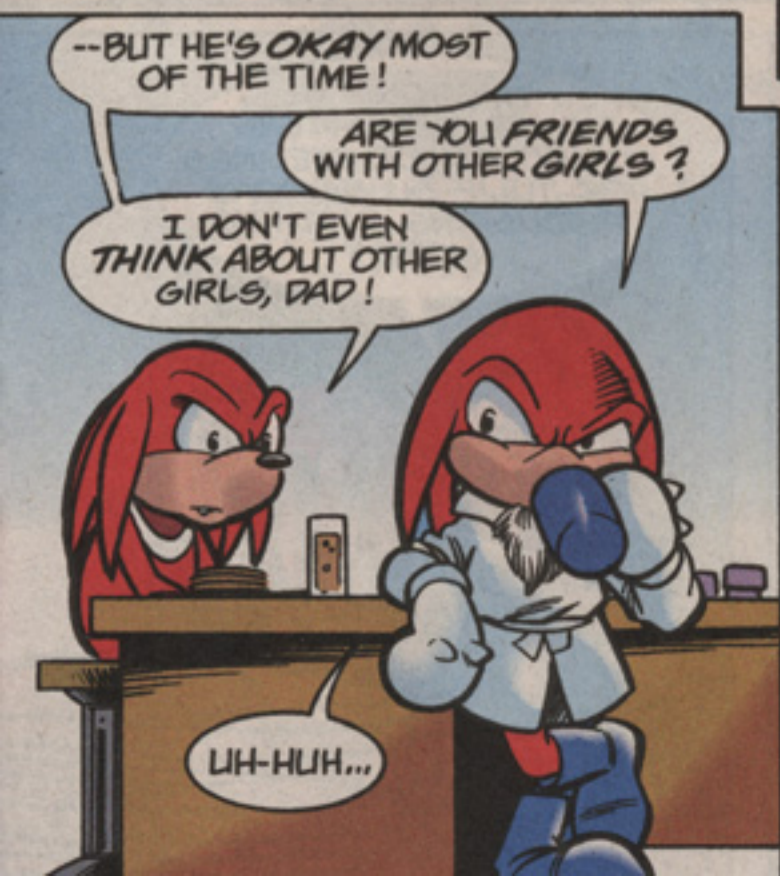
AND WHEN I THINK SHE'S ANGRY, SHE WANTS TO BE FRIENDS!



HOW'S IT DIFFERENT WHEN YOU'RE WITH OTHER FRIENDS?

WE GET ALONG GREAT!

SURE, VECTOR CAN BE A PAIN AT TIMES--



--BUT HE'S OKAY MOST OF THE TIME!

ARE YOU FRIENDS WITH OTHER GIRLS?

I DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT OTHER GIRLS, DAD!

UH-HUH...



SOUNDS TO ME YOU'VE BEEN STRUCK BY THE SOULTOUCH!

SOULTOUCH?

WHAT'S THAT?



WE ECHIDNAS TEND TO DEVELOP OUR INTELLECTUAL SIDE MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER, SO IT'S NATURE'S WAY OF BALANCING THE SCALES!

HUH?

NATURE HAS PROVIDED A MEANS FOR US TO RECOGNIZE OUR LIFE PARTNER FROM THE OPPOSITE SEX.

THAT MEANS BOTH THE BOY AND THE GIRL ARE COMPATIBLE, RIGHT?



IT USUALLY WORKS THAT WAY, YES!

THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AND MOM?



GOOD QUESTION!

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED THAT ONE MYSELF!

I GUESS EVEN THE BEST OF RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRE A LOT OF WORK!



I GET ALONG GREAT WITH THE GUYS!

IT'S JULIE-SU I HAVE MY PROBLEMS WITH!

WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER--



--IF GUYS HUNG AROUND WITH GUYS AND GIRLS STUCK TO THEMSELVES?

PROBABLY, BUT EVENTUALLY THEY WOULD WANT SOMETHING MORE!

MORE?



WHY DON'T WE FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS FOR JULIE-SU BEFORE DISCUSSING ANYTHING MORE?



"I SUPPOSE, BUT WHAT MORE COULD THERE BE?"

Y'KNOW, VECTOR, I THINK YOU'RE ALL MOUTH WHEN IT COMES TO GIRLS!

SEZ YOU!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TALKS ABOUT THEM ALL THE TIME!



THIS CROC DOES MORE THAN JUST TALK!

ALL RIGHT, MISTER BIG MOUTH-- LET'S PUT UP OR SHUT UP!



WADDYA RAPPIN' ABOUT?

YOU SAY YOU'RE HOT STUFF--



-- SO LET'S SEE YOU ASK OUT A GIRL-- ANY GIRL WITHIN EYESIGHT-- TO GO OUT ON A DATE WITH YOU!

HUH?

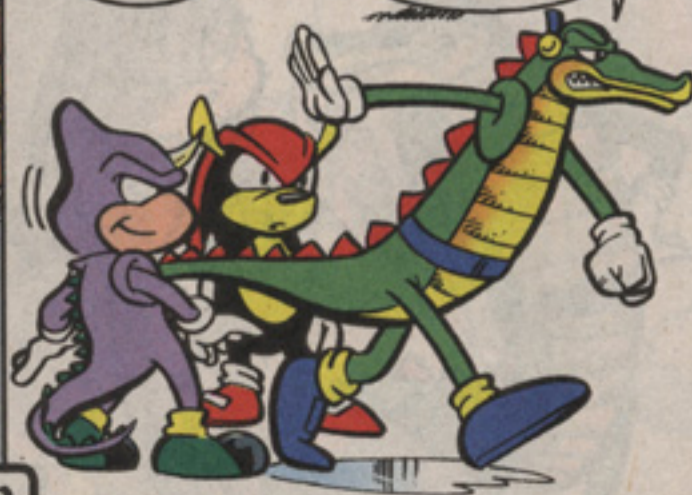
YOU HEARD ME!

OR ARE YOU REALLY JUST ANOTHER--



WAIT HERE!

WATCH AND LEARN FROM THE MAN!





--AND BARRIE IS THROWING THIS WAY-OUT PARTY THIS COMING SATURDAY! WANNA COME?

I'D LOVE TO! WHERE'S IT GOING TO BE?

AT BARRIE'S PAD ACROSS FROM THE COMMONS!

SAY HEY! THEY WERE BOTH HOT!

WITHOUT A PARTNER FOR THE OTHER, EITHER IS A NO GO, THOUGH!

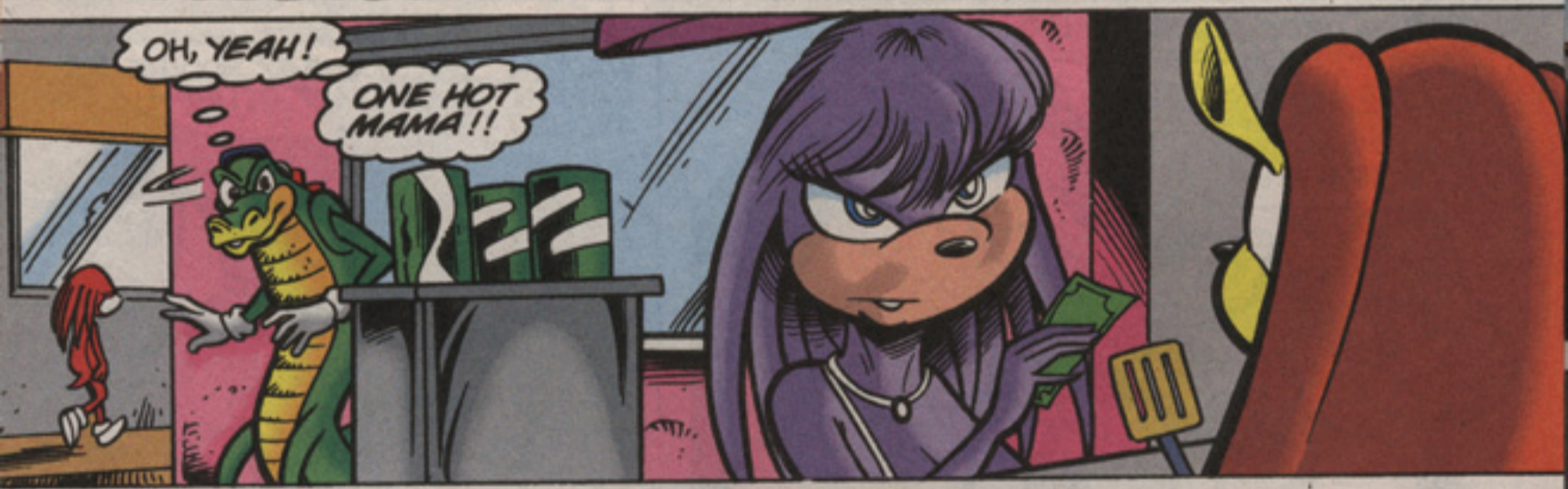
DEFINITELY NOT FOR THIS BOY!

Hmmm...

BABY HAS POTENTIAL!

OH, YEAH!

ONE HOT MAMA!!

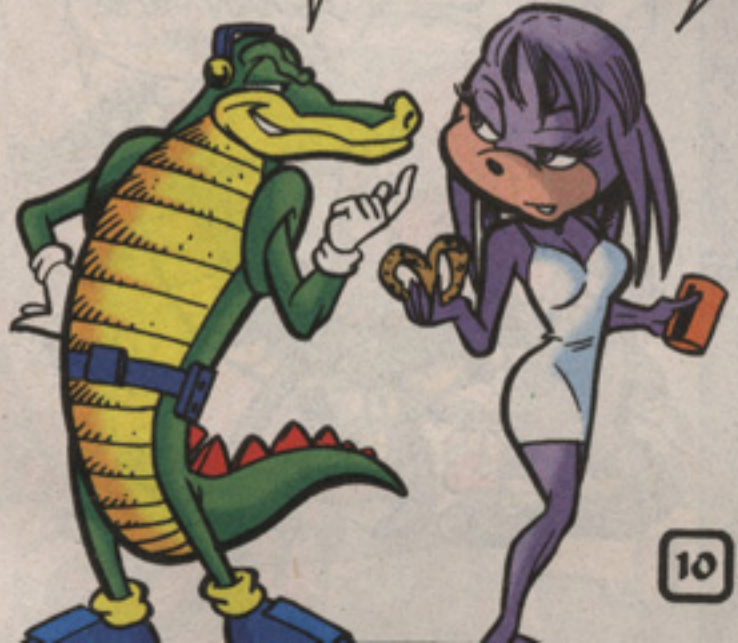


SAY, BABE--

DOING ANYTHING THIS WEEKEND?

I'M STUDYING TO BECOME A MISSIONARY!

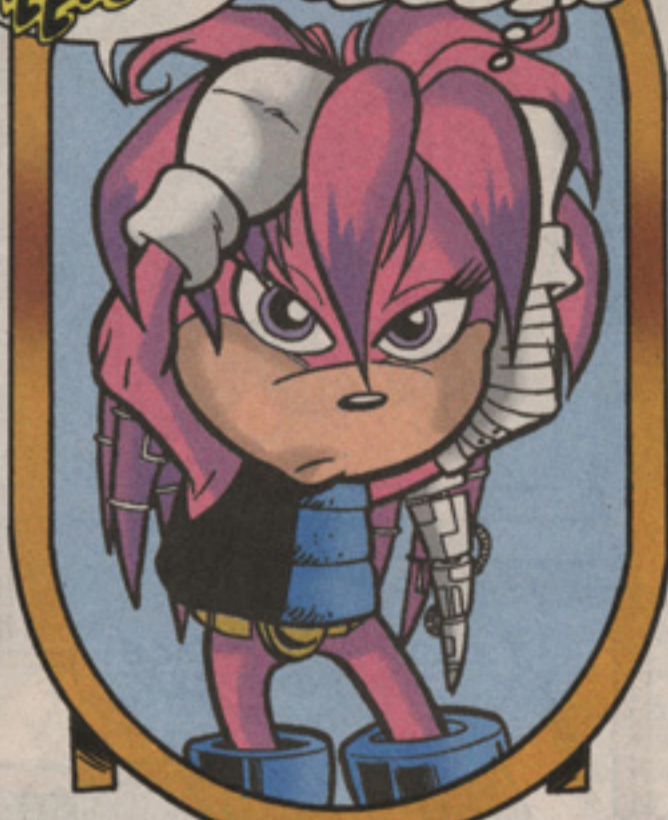
HOW ABOUT GOING OUT THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND INSTEAD?



"YOU'LL BE THE ONE MISSING OUT, BABE!"

YEEUCHH!

I'M DEFINITELY HAVING A BAD HAIR DAY!



THAT'S IT!

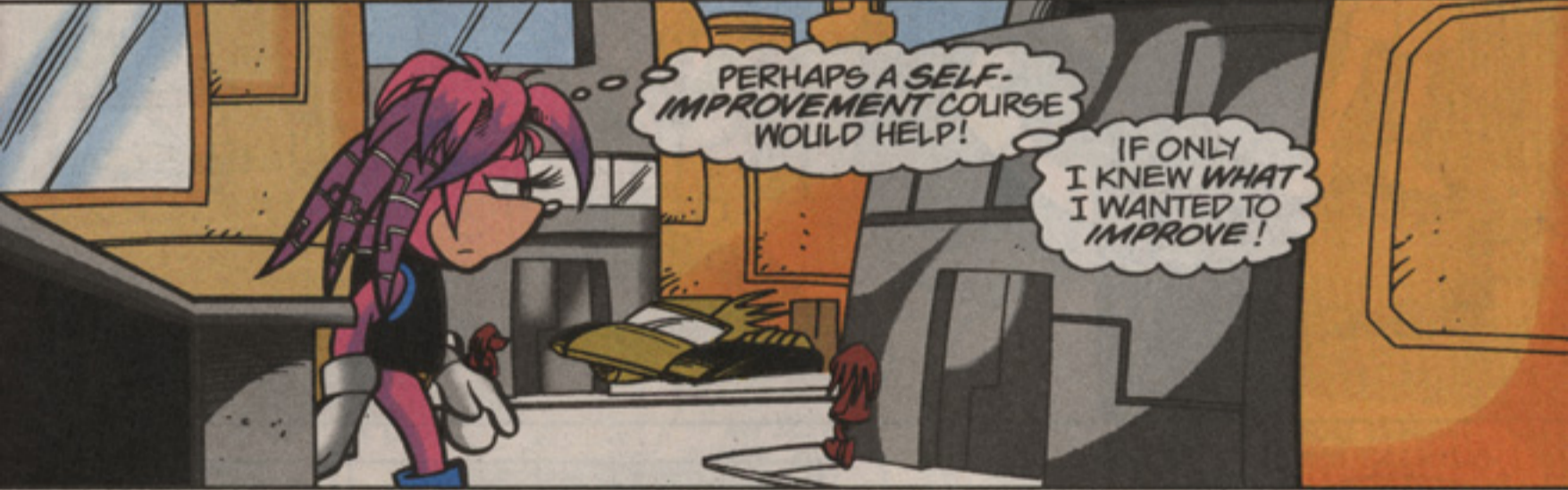
I HAVE TO GET OUT!

I'M STARTING TO SOUND AS SHALLOW AS SOME OF THE DITZES I RUN INTO.



PERHAPS A SELF-IMPROVEMENT COURSE WOULD HELP!

IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO IMPROVE!



MAYBE I'M JUST NOT HAVING ENOUGH FUN IN MY LIFE!

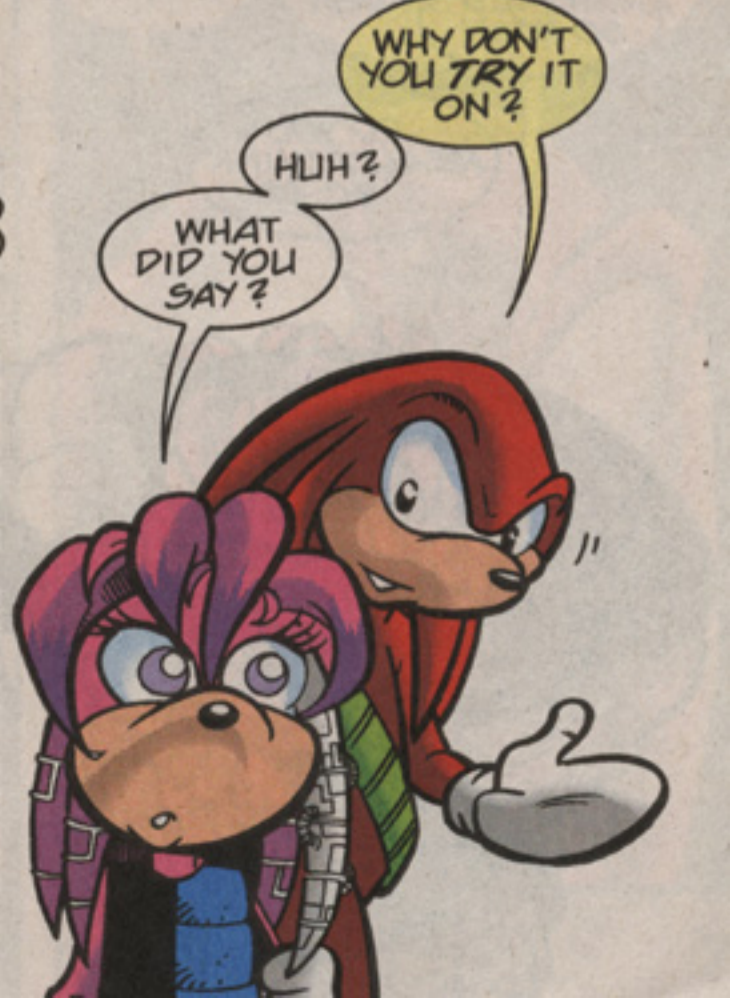
EVERYTHING HAS BEEN A SERIOUS MATTER AS FAR AS I CAN RECALL!

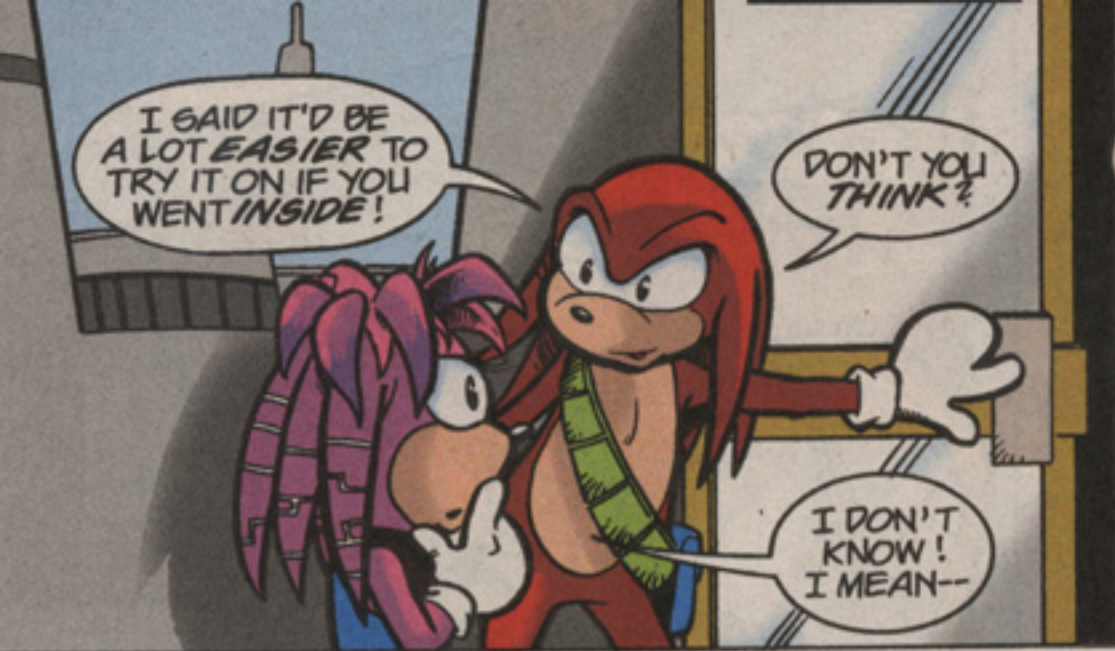


WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT ON?

HUH?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?





I SAID IT'D BE A LOT EASIER TO TRY IT ON IF YOU WENT INSIDE!

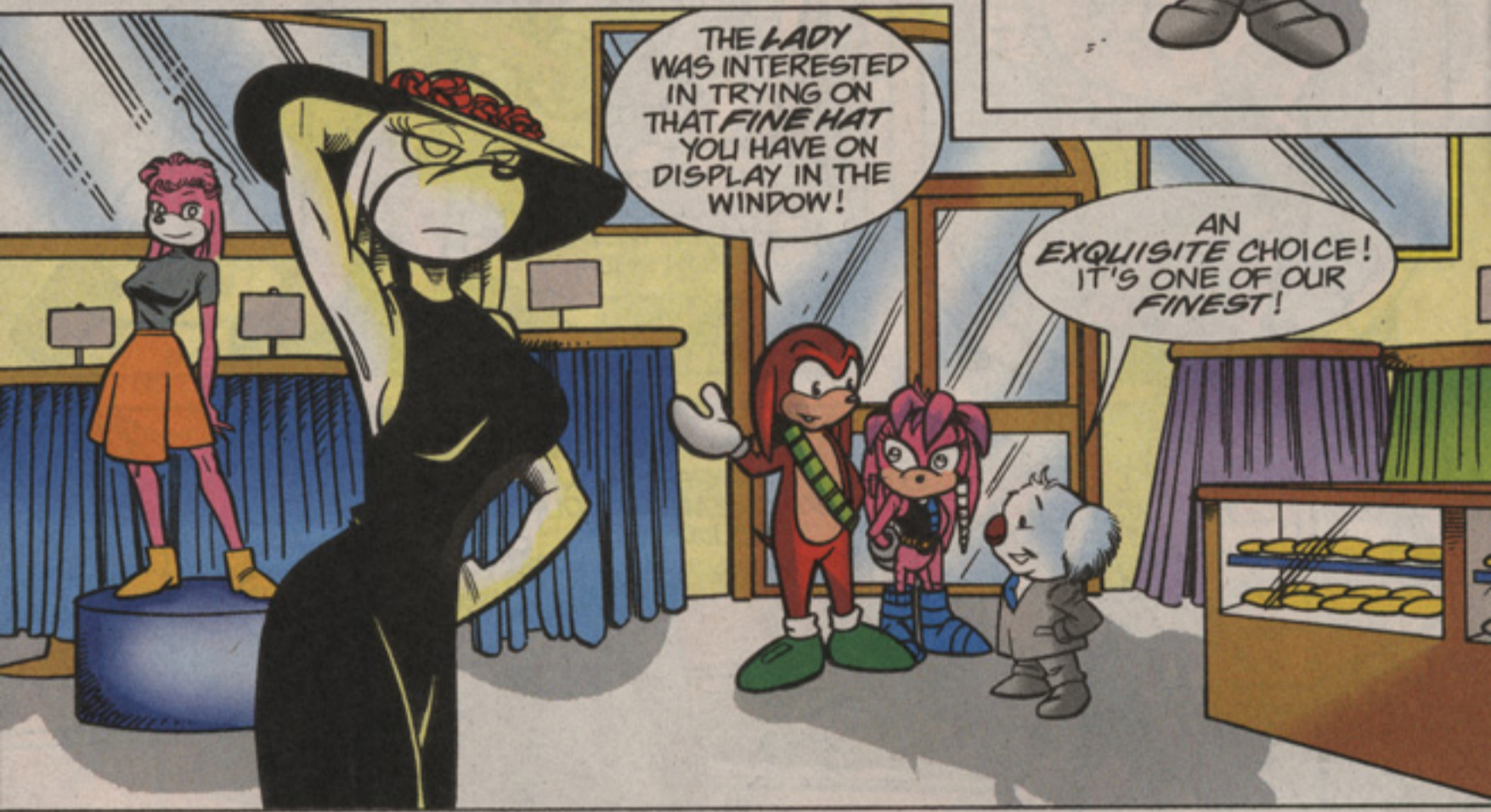
DON'T YOU THINK?

I DON'T KNOW! I MEAN--



CAN'T DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT?

WE AT FOOFI'S ARE HERE TO SERVE!



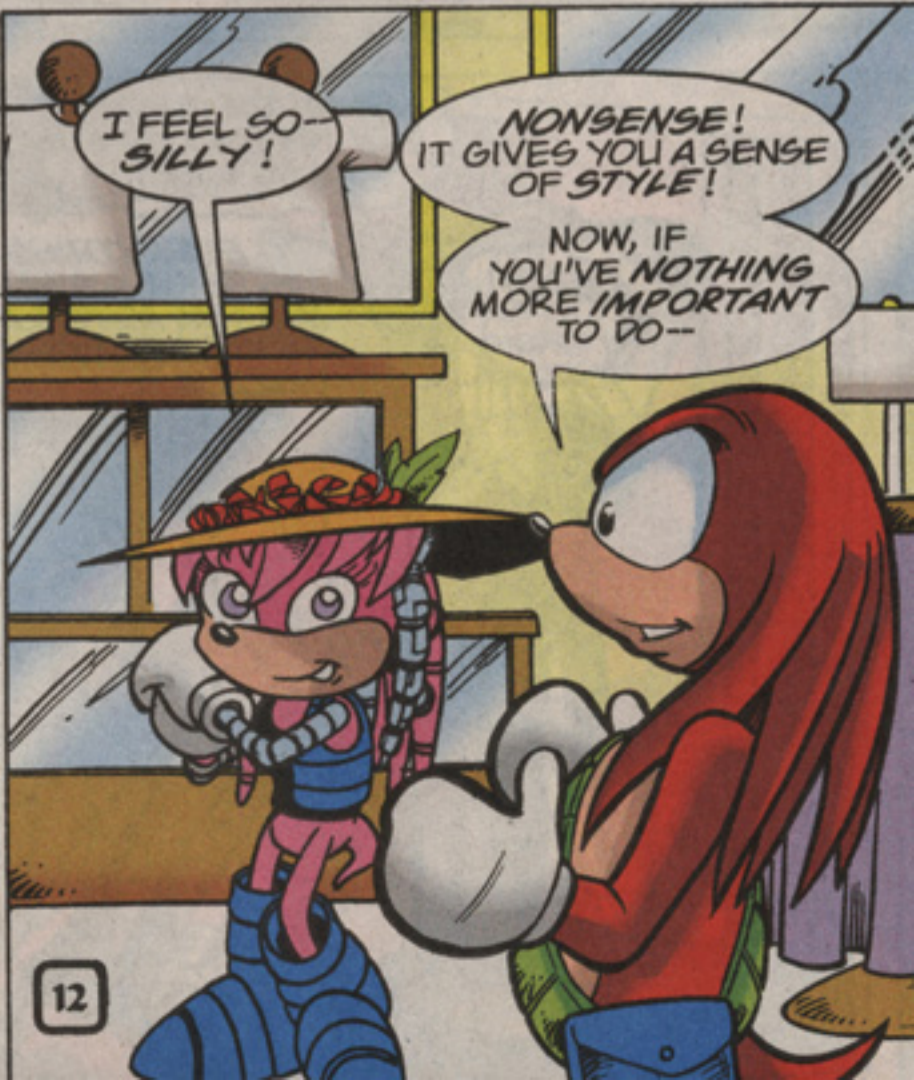
THE LADY WAS INTERESTED IN TRYING ON THAT FINE HAT YOU HAVE ON DISPLAY IN THE WINDOW!

AN EXQUISITE CHOICE! IT'S ONE OF OUR FINEST!



AND IT'S SO YOU!

DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?



I FEEL SO SILLY!

NONSENSE! IT GIVES YOU A SENSE OF STYLE!

NOW, IF YOU'VE NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO DO--

"-- WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME FOR LUNCH?"



ARCHY!

BAMF!

AH, THERE YOU ARE!



I WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING, LAD!



SINCE YOUR FATHER IS PERFORMING HIS MORNING ROUTINE, I THOUGHT NOW WOULD BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY!



THAT'S JUST IT! I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M DOING!

ON THE ONE HAND, I'M HAPPY TO BE WITH DAD!

ON THE OTHER, I KEEP THINKING OF JULIE-SU!



IN LOVE, ARE WE?

MY BOY, THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS EASY ANSWERS!

HAVE YOU DISCUSSED THIS WITH LOCKE?



YEAH, BUT I DON'T THINK HE WAS TOO THRILLED ABOUT IT!

THAT'S ONLY NATURAL!

WHAT PARENT ENJOYS TALKING ABOUT MATTERS THAT DEAL WITH GROWING UP?



PARENTS PREFER THEIR CHILDREN TO STAY CHILDREN SO THEY CAN PROTECT THEM FROM LIFE'S HARSH REALITIES!

AND LOVE CAN BE ONE OF THE HARSHTEST TO DEAL WITH!

SO WHAT DO I DO?

MY BOY, IF YOU RECOGNIZE EVERYTHING IN LIFE HAS CONSEQUENCES AND ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THEM--

--YOU MAKE CHOICES AND LIVE WITH THEM!

HERE'S HOPING I CAN EXPLAIN THIS ONE TO MY DAD LATER!

LET'S GO!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, KNUCKLES--

--YOUR FATHER WAS YOUNG ONCE AS WELL...

BAMF!

KNUCKLES?

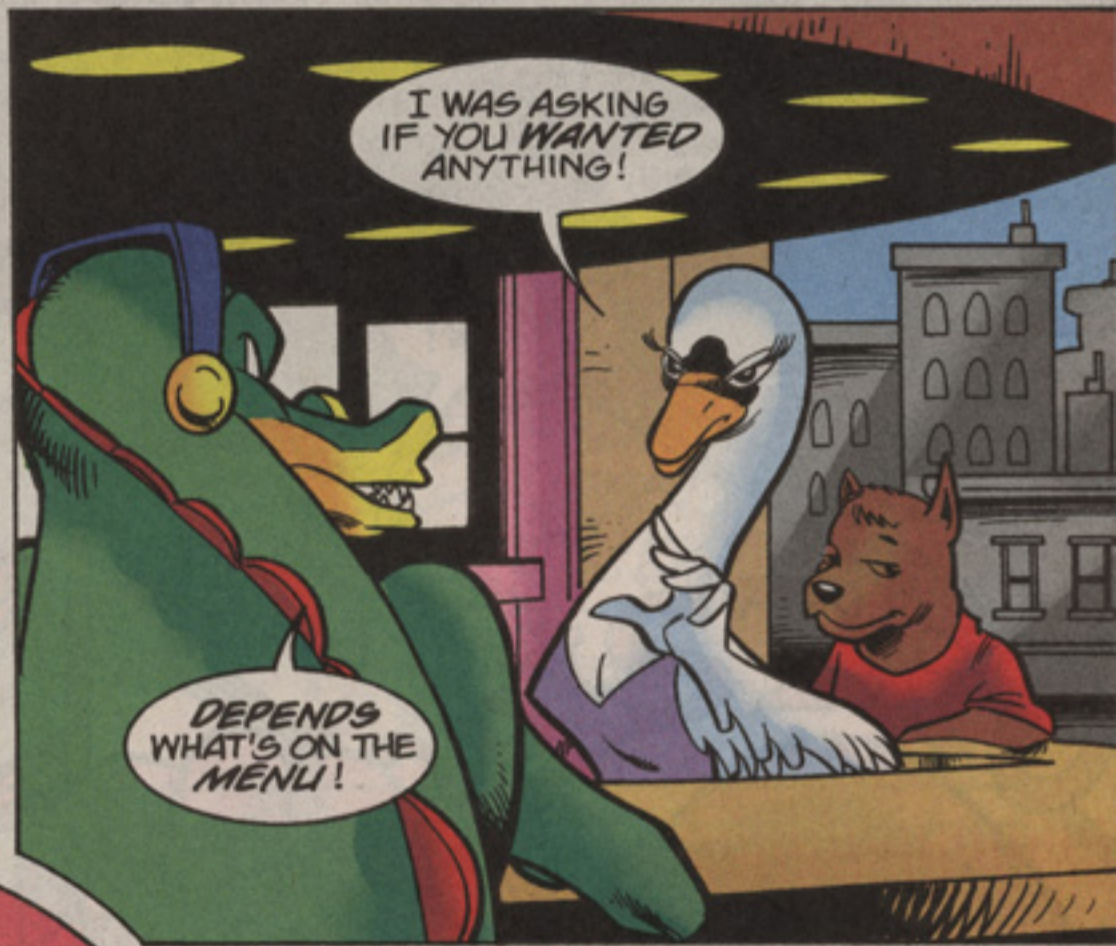
"NOW WHERE DID THAT BOY MAKE OFF TO?"

THIS IS NOT COOL!

IF I DON'T SCORE I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT FROM ESPY!

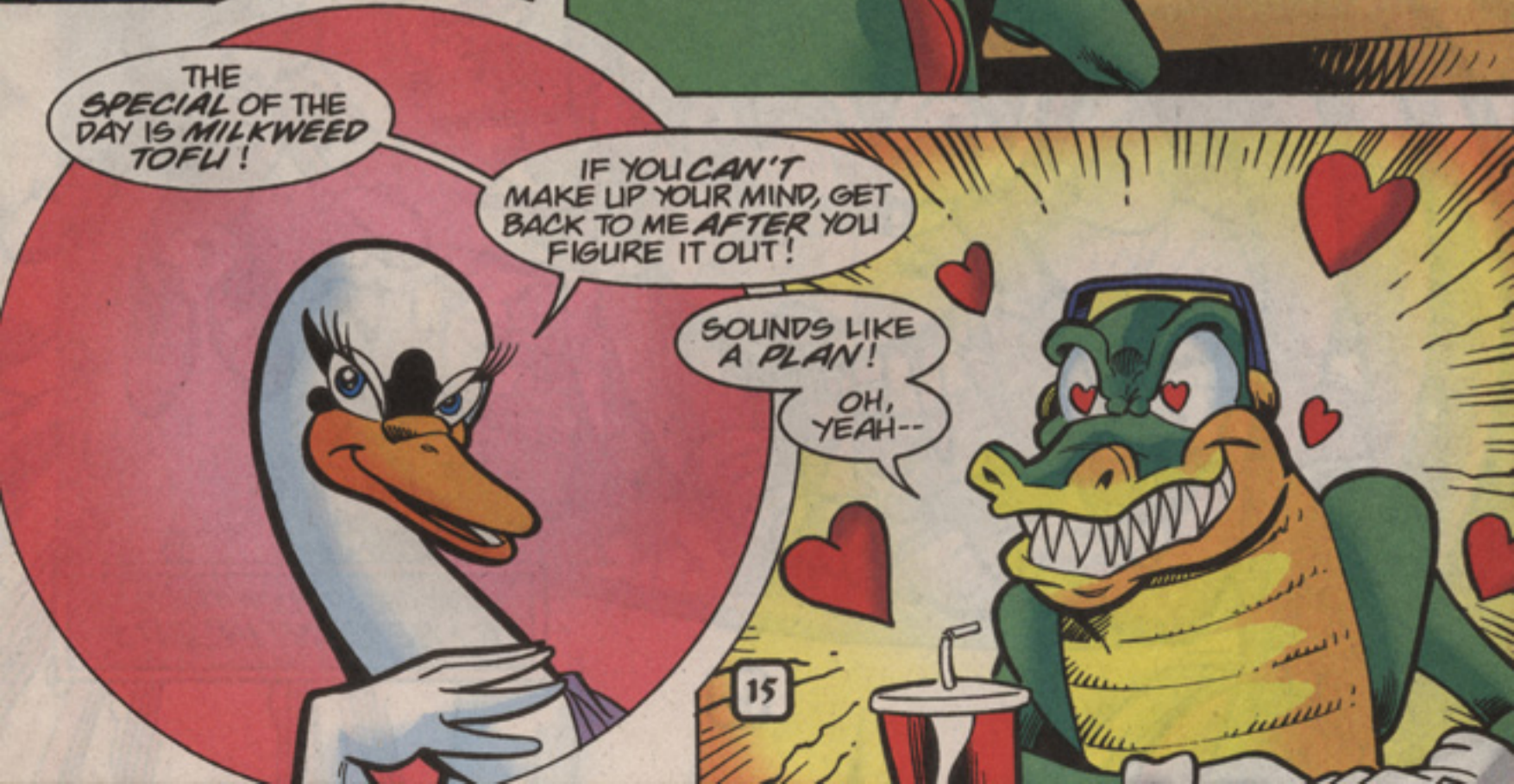


HUH?



I WAS ASKING IF YOU WANTED ANYTHING!

DEPENDS WHAT'S ON THE MENU!



THE SPECIAL OF THE DAY IS MILKWEED TOFU!

IF YOU CAN'T MAKE UP YOUR MIND, GET BACK TO ME AFTER YOU FIGURE IT OUT!

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN!

OH, YEAH--

"--WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR DESSERT?"

BISTRO

SO TELL ME, JULIE-SU, IS THERE ANYONE *SPECIAL* IN YOUR LIFE AT THE MOMENT?

THAT'S A TOUGH ONE, RAYNOR!

I WISH I KNEW!

BISTRO

TALK ABOUT POOR TIMING...
TO BE CONTINUED!

MIGHTY THE ARMADILLO

1123

Friend In Need

WHAT BEGINS AS A ROUTINE DAY ABRUPTLY CHANGES UPON THE ARRIVAL OF A VISITOR AT MIGHTY'S DEN, LOCATED AT ROCKY HILL ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE FLOATING ISLAND...



BOY, DOES THIS EVER BRING BACK MEMORIES!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD-- THAT'S WHY I SOUGHT YOU OUT!

SO WHAT DO YOU NEED ME FOR IF YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS ?!

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PENCILER: MANNY GALAN
INKER: ANDREW PEPOY
COLORIST: BARRY GROSSMAN
LETTERER: VICKIE WILLIAMS
EDITOR: J.F. GABRIE



SIMPLE! I NEED YOU FOR YOUR MUSCLE!

IT DOESN'T TELL ME WHY I SHOULD GO WITH YOU!

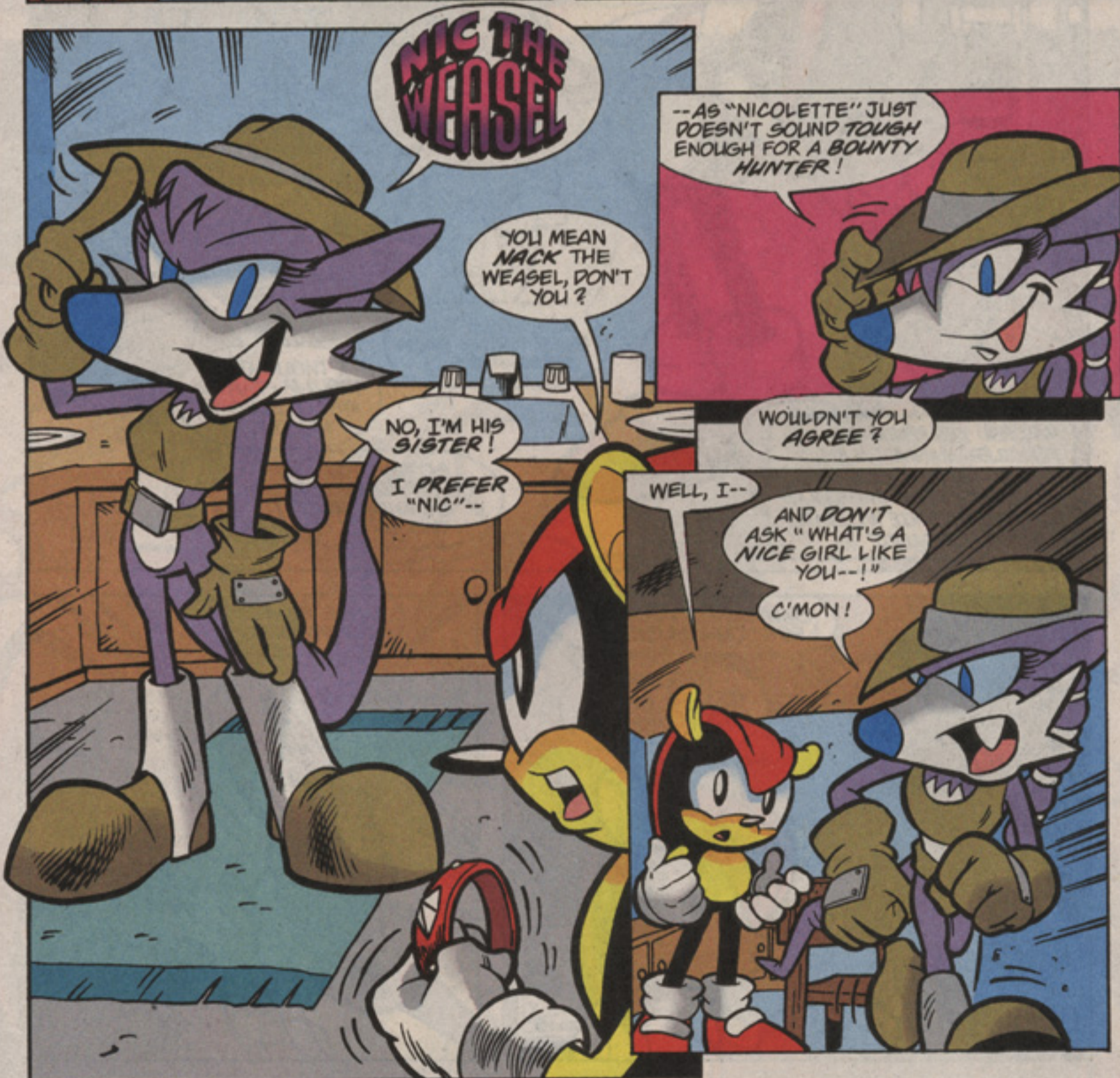
POWER UP



SINCE YOU NEED CONVINCING--

--IS THIS REASON ENOUGH?

WHAT THE--?!?



"TIME'S A'WASTIN'!"

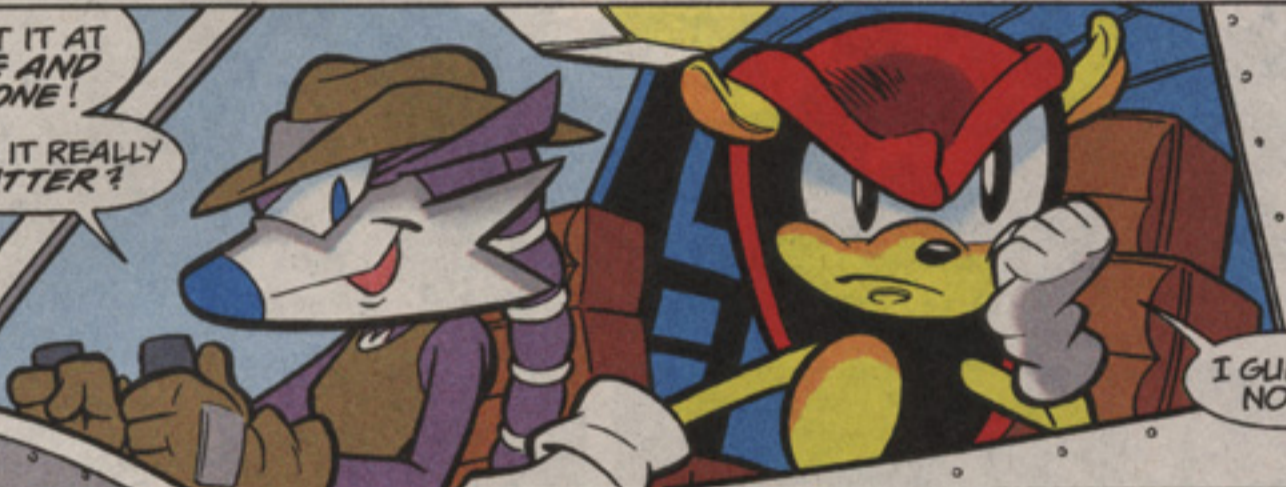


THIS IS SOME CRAFT!

WHERE DID YOU GET IT?

I BOUGHT IT AT THE FIVE AND GEMSTONE!

DOES IT REALLY MATTER?



I GUESS NOT!

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT ANYTHING, REALLY--?

-EXCEPT THE CHANCE TO HELP RAY ANY WAY I CAN!

IT WAS ABOUT SIX OR SEVEN YEARS AGO BUT IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT AND TAKEN TO THE SLAVE LABOR CAMP...



"I REMEMBER SEEING RAY FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHAKING LIKE A LEAF, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM SHOWING CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS..."



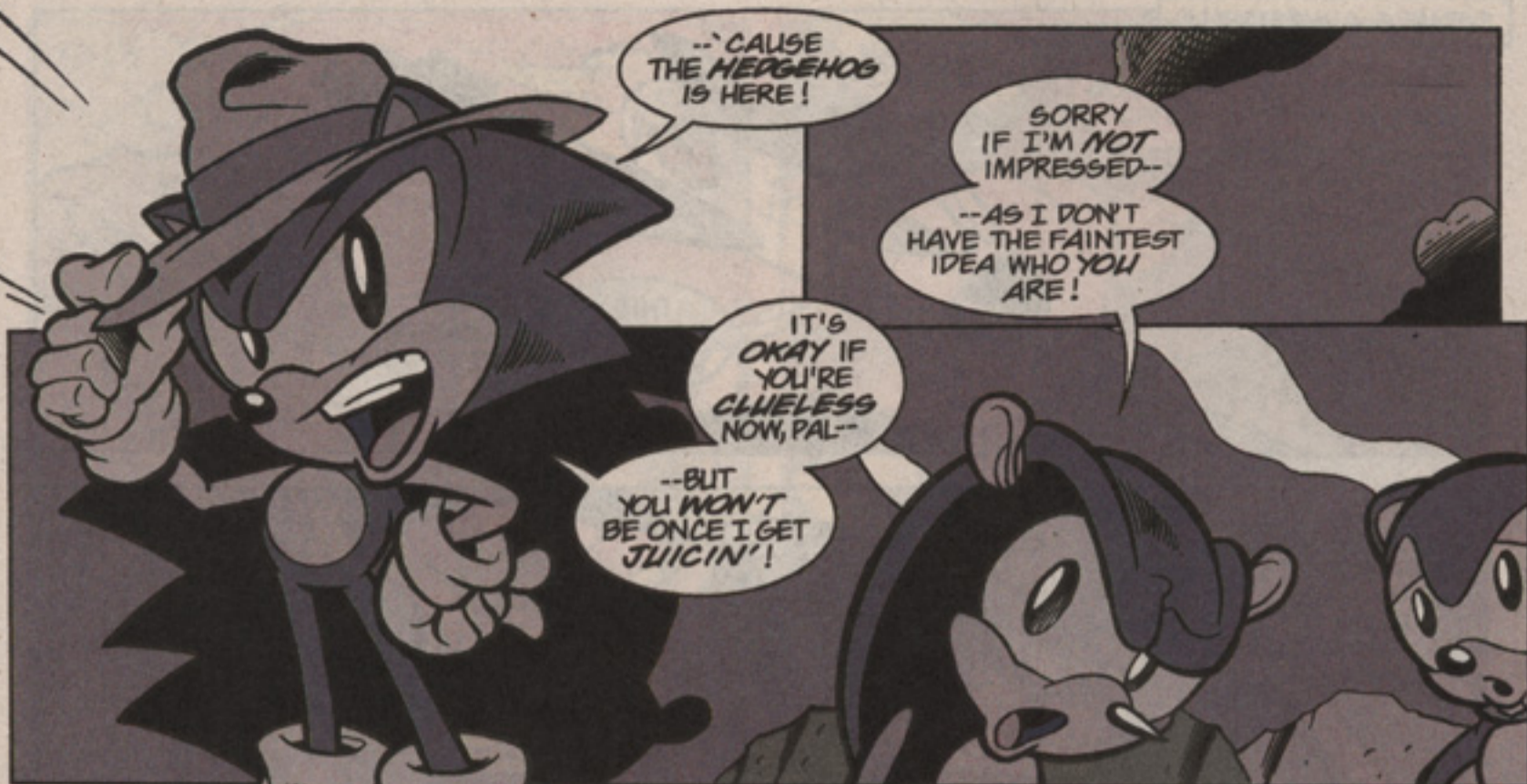
H-H-HERE!
H-H-HAVE M-M-MY S-S-SEAT!

HEY, LITTLE FELLER, TAKE IT EASY!

I-I-I'M T-T-TRYING T-T-TO!

NO REASON FOR FEAR--





--' CAUSE
THE HEDGEHOG
IS HERE!

SORRY
IF I'M NOT
IMPRESSED--
--AS I DON'T
HAVE THE FAINTEST
IDEA WHO YOU
ARE!

IT'S
OKAY IF
YOU'RE
CLUELESS
NOW, PAL--

--BUT
YOU WON'T
BE ONCE I GET
JUICIN'!



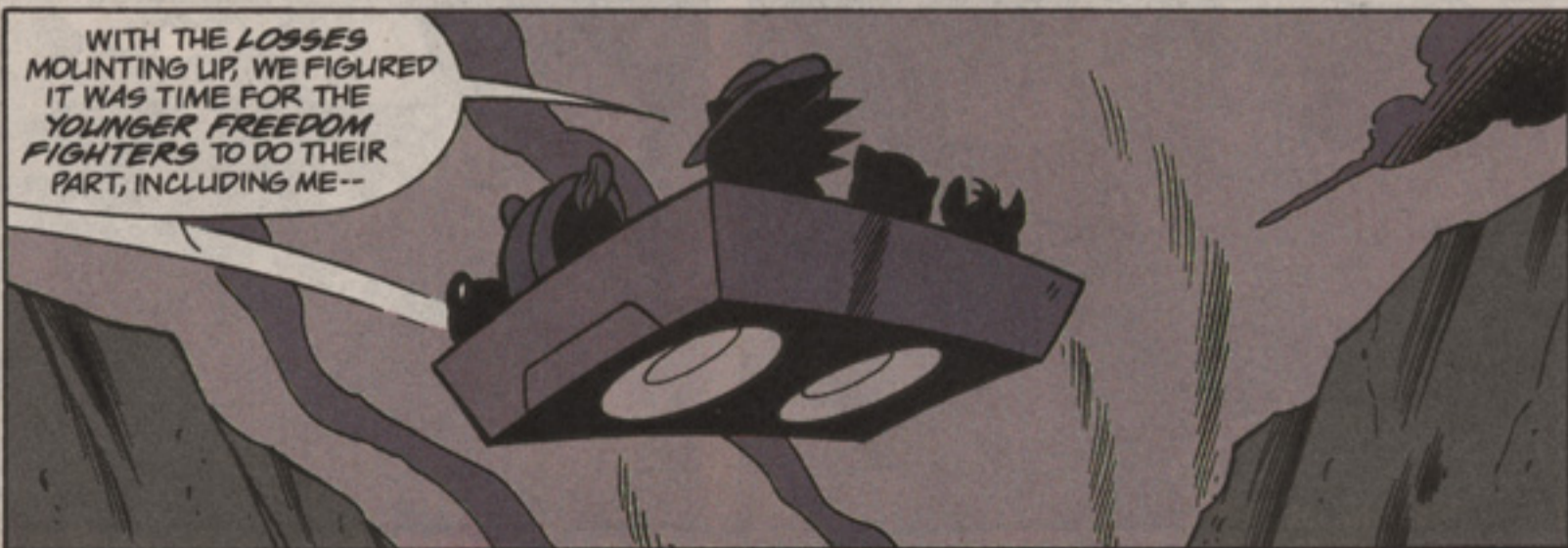
IS THAT A
FACT?

IF YOU'RE SO SPECIAL,
HOW COME ROBOTNIK HASN'T TAKEN
SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WITH YOU
LIKE HE DID WITH ME?



OL' ROBO-BUTT
HAS PROBABLY
FORGOTTEN ALL
ABOUT ME!

OUR
ELDERS HAVE
BEEN CARRYING
THE FIGHT UNTIL
RECENTLY!



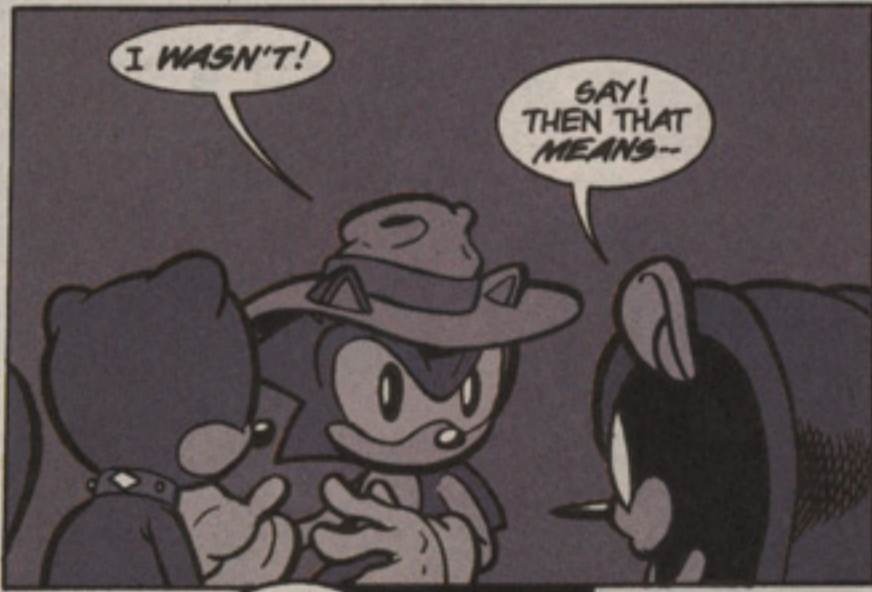
WITH THE LOSSES
MOUNTING UP, WE FIGURED
IT WAS TIME FOR THE
YOUNGER FREEDOM
FIGHTERS TO DO THEIR
PART, INCLUDING ME--



--NONE OTHER THAN TRUE BLUE--

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

W-W-WAIT A-A-A M-M-MINUTE! I-I-I D-D-DON'T R-R-RECALL Y-Y-YOU B-B-BEING C-C-CAPTURED A-A-ALONG W-W-WITH US!



I WASN'T!

SAY! THEN THAT MEANS--



--THAT'S MY CUE TO SCOPE THINGS OUT!

WAIT!

WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE HERE?

YOU'D ONLY CRAMP MY STYLE! I'LL BE BACK LATER!



--YOU GOT IT!

I'M THE SECRET AGENT MAN BEING SENT BEHIND ENEMY LINES!

ONCE WE GET TO WHERE WE'RE GOING--



I THOUGHT HE WAS A REAL PAIN IN THE TUSH-- BUT HE DID COME BACK--AND THAT'S WHEN THINGS STARTED GETTING REALLY HAIRY...

YOU'VE BEEN REAL QUIET ALL DURING THE TRIP, MIGHTY!

IS ANYTHING WRONG?

NO!
NOTHING AT
ALL!

I WAS JUST
THINKING!

FORTUNATELY,
IT'S NOT YOUR
BRAIN CELLS
I NEED UP TO
SPEED--

-- ONLY YOUR
BRAWN!

READY TO LIVE
UP TO YOUR PART OF
THE BARGAIN?

YEAH--BUT ANY
SIGN THINGS AREN'T
ON THE UP-AND-UP--

-- AND WE
MIGHT HAVE TO
RENEGOTIATE!

BOY, DOES
THIS PLACE LOOK
SPOOKIER THAN
THE LAST TIME I
WAS HERE!

THE NATIVES AREN'T FRIENDLY
IN THESE PARTS!

THAT'S
ANOTHER
REASON
YOU'RE WITH
ME!

HOLD IT!
SOMEONE IS
COMING!

IT'S ONLY--

FIONA

YOU'RE--

--ALIVE?

NO THANKS
TO YOU OR YOUR
FRIENDS!

COME TO
MAKE AMENDS,
MIGHTY?

**NEXT: LONG FORGOTTEN SECRETS
AND OTHER BURIED TREASURES!**



**PRO ART BY
KEN PENDERS!**
COLOR IN AND PIN-UP!